

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

**Listing of the Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A connection architecture for an xDSL networks network with a metal port, ~~wherein a voice signal is obtained from a switching exchange, reaches a horizontal terminal block, continues, the architecture comprising:~~  
a switching exchange electrically connected to a terminal of an intermediate distributor and from there to an assembly formed by distribution frame via a terminal block of a horizontal distribution frame, the intermediate distribution frame being configured to provide a voice signal to a filter and/or a splitter and a DSLAM, which wherein the DSLAM is configured to supply a high-speed digital signal xDSL from a network, there being emitted from the assembly receive an xDSL signal from a network and the filter and/or splitter is or are configured to provide a combined voice and data xDSL signal which reaches the intermediate distributor, and is transmitted to a vertical terminal block and a subsequent separation filter, thus reaching a user either on a telephone or on a computer, wherein the intermediate distributor or the vertical terminal block has a connection element which has cut-off and test contacts, and the metal port is to the intermediate distribution frame;  
a terminal block of a vertical distribution frame configured to receive the combined voice and data signal from the intermediate distribution frame and to transmit the combined signal to a separation filter, the separation filter being configured to output a voice signal and a data signal, the intermediate distribution frame or the terminal block of the vertical distribution frame comprising a connection element that includes cut-off and test contacts;  
wherein a metal port block disposed on the connection element itself of the intermediate distributor or on the vertical terminal block, thereby obtaining of the vertical or horizontal distribution frame is configured to obtain a signal from the metal port which is subsequently to be conveyed to a test rack, without needing to disconnect or reconnect an electrical conductor of the architecture rack without disconnecting the filter and/or splitter.

2. (Currently Amended) A connection architecture according to claim 1, further comprising a terminal metal port block that comprises the metal port and is disposed on the a terminal of the intermediate ~~distributor~~-distribution frame, the terminal metal port block including a set of pairs of contacts on a base thereof, which are disposed corresponding to cavities which are provided in the terminal block of the intermediate ~~distributor~~ distribution frame, which correspond to contacts which transmit the combined voice ~~signal and high-speed~~ and xDSL signal~~xDSL~~.

3. (Previously Presented) A connection architecture according to claim 2, wherein the pairs of contacts are disposed corresponding to the cavities corresponding to the contacts for the voice signal which exist on the terminal of the intermediate ~~distributor~~ distribution frame.

4. (Currently Amended) A connection architecture according to claim 1, further comprising a terminal metal port block that comprises the metal port, the metal port of the ~~terminal block~~ being disposed on the ~~vertical terminal block~~, such that the terminal block has of the vertical distribution frame, the metal port block having on a base thereof a set of pairs of contacts which are disposed corresponding to cavities in the ~~vertical~~ terminal block~~[[,]]~~ of the vertical distribution frame which correspond to contacts of the combined ~~signal voice and~~ xDSL signal.

5 (Currently Amended) A connection architecture according claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2, comprising a connector configured to be connected to one or more adjacent terminal metal port blocks by a bus.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A connection architecture according to claim 1, wherein the metal port~~[[,]]~~ through which the metallic access to the intermediate ~~distributor~~

~~or the vertical~~ distribution frame or the terminal block is made, comprises of the vertical  
distribution frame is made, is a metal port comprising a plurality of boards, containing  
electrical components, each one of the boards having contact pins or plugs on a lower edge of  
the board, to be housed in cavities for a patch and test or protection area of the intermediate  
~~distributor or~~ distribution frame or of the terminal block of the vertical ~~terminal block~~  
distribution frame.

8. (Currently amended) A connection architecture according to claim 7, wherein  
the boards ~~comprise an array having plurality of boards~~ are arranged in an array or cartridges  
and have connectors for interconnection thereof ~~and/or for connection to at least one~~  
~~cartridge in the~~ of the cartridges into an array.

9. (Previously Presented) A connection architecture according to claim 8,  
wherein the connectors that interconnect the cartridges in array include buses.

10. (Currently amended) A connection architecture according to claim 7, wherein  
the ~~terminal~~ metal port block includes a housing, and the boards are configured as cartridges  
having lids, which, when coupled with the housing, provide a closed outer surface which  
protects electrical components thereof.

11. (Previously Presented) Connection architecture according to claim 7 wherein  
the boards are laminated, and/or incorporate the electrical components on one or both sides,  
and/or are protected within a housing.

12. (Currently Amended) A ~~terminal~~ metal port block for use in the connection  
architecture according to claim 1, wherein the ~~terminal~~ metal port block comprises the metal  
port and is disposed on the terminal of the intermediate distributor, the ~~terminal~~ metal port  
block including a set of pairs of contacts on a base thereof, which are disposed corresponding  
to cavities which are provided in the terminal block of the intermediate distributor, which  
correspond to contacts which transmit the combined voice and xDSL signal ~~and high-speed~~

signal xDSL.

13. (Currently Amended) A ~~terminal~~ metal port block according to claim 12, wherein the pairs of contacts are disposed corresponding to the cavities corresponding to the contacts for the voice signal which exist ~~[[on]]~~ in the terminal of the intermediate distributor.

14. (Currently Amended) A ~~terminal~~ metal port block for use in the connection architecture according to claim 1, wherein the ~~terminal~~ metal port block comprises the metal port, the metal port ~~of the terminal block~~ being disposed on the ~~vertical~~ terminal block of the vertical distribution frame, such that the terminal block has on a base thereof a set of pairs of contacts which are disposed corresponding to cavities in the ~~vertical~~ terminal block of the vertical distribution frame, which correspond to contacts of the combined signal.

15. (Currently Amended) A ~~terminal~~ metal port block according claim ~~[[1]]~~ 12, comprising a connector configured to be connected to the one or more adjacent ~~terminal~~ metal port blocks by a bus.

16. (Previously Presented) A connection architecture according to claim 11, wherein the cartridge comprises an upper or folding lid.

17. (Currently Amended) A connection architecture for a xDSL network with a metal port, the architecture comprising:

a switching exchange electrically connected to a terminal of an intermediate distributor ~~via distribution frame via a terminal block of a horizontal terminal block distribution frame~~, the switching exchange configured to provide a voice signal to a filter and/or splitter and a DSLAM, wherein the DSLAM is configured to receive an xDSL signal from a network and the filter and/or splitter is or are configured to provide a combined voice and data xDSL signal to the intermediate distributor ~~terminal~~ distribution frame;

a vertical ~~terminal~~ block of a vertical distribution frame configured to receive the combined voice and data xDSL signal from the intermediate distributor ~~distribution fame~~ and

to transmit the combined signal to a separation filter, the separation filter being configured to output a voice signal and a data signal wherein the intermediate distributor distribution frame or the terminal of the vertical distribution frame comprises a connection element that includes cut-off and test contacts; and

a metal port block on the connection element, wherein the ~~intermediate distributor~~ metal port block is configured so that a signal can be obtained from the metal port and conveyed to a test rack without disconnecting the filter and/or splitter.

18. (New) A method of providing test access in a connection architecture for xDSL networks, wherein the architecture is configured so that the voice signal is obtained from a switching exchange, reaches a terminal block of a horizontal distributor, continues to an intermediate distributor and to an assembly formed by a filter or splitter and a DSLAM, which supplies a highspeed digital signal xDSL from a network, the assembly being configured to emit a combined voice and xDSL signal which reaches the intermediate distributor, and is transmitted to a terminal block of a vertical distributor and to a subsequent separation filter so that the combined voice and xDSL signal thereby reaches a user either on a telephone or on a computer, the intermediate distributor or the vertical terminal block having a connection element which has cut-off and test contacts, the method comprising:

providing a metal port block on a connection element of the intermediate distributor or on the terminal block of the vertical distributor;

obtaining a metal port signal from the metal port block for conveying to a test rack, without disconnecting or reconnecting a bridge and/or a cable of the connection architecture.

19. (New) A cartridge for insertion in a metal port access block for use in the connection architecture according to claim 1, wherein the cartridge is adapted for being disposed on a terminal block of the intermediate distributor or a terminal block of the vertical distributor to thereby obtain a test access to a metal port, the cartridge having contact pins or plugs, on the lower edge to be housed in cavities providing connections for the patch and test or protection area of a distribution frame, and connectors for linking the cartridge to the metal port block.

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Page 8 of 14

20. (New) A metal port block according claim 14, comprising a connector configured to be connected to the one or more adjacent metal port blocks by a bus.